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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

BLUE DENIM FOR DECORATIVE PURPOSES.

LAURA B. STARR.

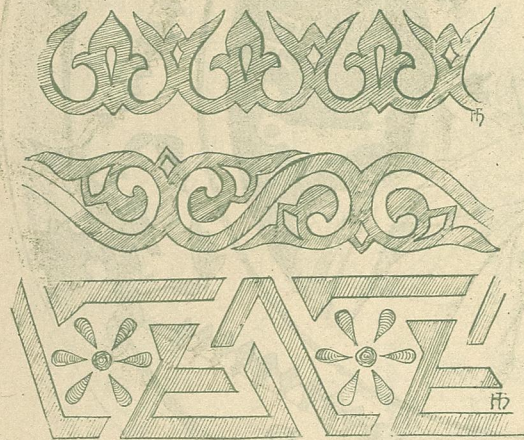
BLUE denim, which until lately has been used only for overalls, blouses, etc., etc., for working men, has now attained a prominent place among the fabrics used for curtains, portieres and upholstery. Country people may be more likely to recognize the material by the name of Kentucky jean; it is solid blue on the right side while the wrong shows a white twill. The same material is also found in brown, but, while this is very rich and handsome in effect, it does not lend itself to such a variety of purposes as does the blue.

The associated artists were the first to use denim for portieres and wall covering, but now there is hardly any purpose for which a good substantial cloth is suitable but some one has made use of it. It is the most durable of all cotton fabrics, and repeated launders only improve the color. It ranges in price from ten to twenty cents per yard, and is about a half a yard wide.

For wall covering it may be used in a variety of ways; sometimes it forms the main covering, then again is only used for a frieze or dado.

For a room that is light and flooded with sunshine it might be used for the entire wall covering, making the frieze of the blue and white Japanese calico, which harmonizes so well with it. This calico is three-eighths of a yard wide, and costs twenty-five cents a yard. It could be used the whole width if the walls are high enough to admit of so deep a frieze. A picture moulding of gilt should be fastened over the lower edge.

Where the Japanese calico is not to be had or not desired, the frieze may be made of the denim turned wrong side out or following one of the Arabian designs given herewith, cut a border and applique it on wrong side out, finishing the edges with a couching of large white cord. If a cotton cord cannot be found the right size use coarse white wool, doing the couching with finer blue to match the goods. These designs are available in any town where perforated patterns are made, as they can be enlarged to the desired size. I have had very much smaller ones enlarged and used them for myself and friends for months.



Arabic Borders.

A very pretty contrast was a room the walls of which were covered with the straw tinted butchers' paper, finished with a frieze and dado of blue denim, a narrow gilt moulding outlining the edge. Another wall had a frieze of this kind bordered with a narrow band of maroon plush.

The denim is also used for upholstering furniture, being durable and of a color to harmonize with almost anything. A handsome box lounge,—six feet long, three wide and eighteen inches deep,—was upholstered with it, while for trunks, which in many cases one must keep in the living rooms, it makes an admirable cover, being less obtrusive than cretonne and more desirable.

Over the lounge was used a blue and white woven counterpane which had belonged to the lady's grandmother. Three large pillows stood up against the wall, making it a most easy inviting corner. These pillows were covered with denim, one showing the dark side, the other two the light. One dark and one light one were embroidered in applique with the designs mentioned, putting the light on the dark and *vice versa*. The third one was covered with etched denim, which shows an all

over design in white on the blue. This is done by means of acid, which extracts all the color, leaving a white design on the dark blue back ground. Unless one is a practical etcher, this could hardly be done at home, even then it would probably be cheaper to buy it at a dollar a yard.

Either of the three designs given may be used for portieres, finishing the edge with a couching of light weight cotton rope. Another design has clusters of four geometrical figures applique, while a large showy scroll design, done with the rope, encircles and seems to hold them together.

On a brown denim portiere these figures were cut out of golden brown velvet, which made an exceedingly rich and handsome effect. A simpler way of making them is to use the light side for the right and turn up a four or five inch hem of the dark out the right all the way round. They should always be lined, except they are used for a Summer cottage without ornamentation, then the single thickness will answer.

Counterpanes and bolster covers are made of denim, some very elaborately ornamented, others plain with only a ravelled fringe on three sides, or a white knotted fringe is occasionally seen.

Denim is also used for draping canopies over the heads of beds, which, by the way, are becoming quite fashionable again. One lady who had taste, skill and plenty of time embroidered her denim draper all over with a conventional flower design in Kensington stitch, using No. 8 Dexter's white cotton. It was not a long job, and the result more than paid for the labor.

She made the canopy herself too. She bought four scantling three inches wide and six long, these she nailed securely to the back of the head of the bed, one at each corner and two between. Across the top she nailed another to hold them secure; to this she fastened a frame work by nailing a piece two feet long at each corner, these being held in place by another as long as the bed was wide. Across the back she hung her denim plain—though if she had used plain goods she would have lain it in pleats—a plain piece was cut to fit the top, then she tacked her curtain on in pleats, and draped them back with white cotton rope and tassels. The cost was very little, and the canopy quite an addition to her room.

In putting up portieres, in the place of rings and pins, half yard lengths of the cotton rope are sewed to the goods and thrown over the pole and tied. The ends are untwisted to make the ravelled rope tassels so much used now.

For table clothes the denim is used plain, fringed all around, with a strip of white corduroy laid down the center of the table. Linen may be used in place of the corduroy if desired. The etched denim is used with the white centerpiece, and sometimes with a pale yellow one, but that depends upon the color of the bowls and flowers to be used for the decoration. With the plain blue, the pale yellow bowls filled with dark red and red brown crysanthemums may be used with the best effect. The Rookwood ware is exceedingly pretty with the etched table covers. These covers may be embroidered if desired, but the color is rich back ground, and it is well to make the decorations of flowers and china. A table spread to use in a sitting room or chamber might be embroidered with good effect.

A yard square lounge pillow was covered with the plain denim, while a strip of blue and white Japanese calico was laid plain through the center on both sides, the edges laced with large white cord tied with long loops, the ends being fringed out, making soft fluffy tassels. This large white cord is very effective, and may be used in a great variety of ways. For outlining a braiding pattern it is admirable, and is very easily accomplished. A bold design should be selected, and it should be used only on large articles. An ingenious woman will find any number of ways of combining the denim and the cord, for the carrying out of one idea always brings a dozen in its train.

THE ROMANCE OF THE RUG.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.

WHILST enjoying the cosy warmth and elastic softness of a rich Persian or other Oriental rug, it is amusing to think of the amount of chaffering and bargaining in foreign tongues and varied dialects before shipment from the East in transfer from buyee to buyer. Commend us to the races of Asia Minor for volubility and gesticulation and grimace, and for prolonged negotiations over business transactions that in civilized countries could be settled with a word and a nod. The invariable practice of Mahomedans if they are sellers is first of all to demand an exorbitant price and gradually decrease this by fractions, swearing, with each decline, by the beard of the Prophet that they are losers. Entire days are thus often consumed over a single article. The American buyer of rugs must have the patience of Job, the impassivity of a Hindoo and exercise any amount of will power to steady his nerves over shrieking exclamations and groans at his not being satisfied at